

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus for removing coverings laid on even surfaces, comprising a support frame (10) for mounting driving wheels (16) and for accommodating a motor (17) and a gear (18) for driving the driving wheels (16), and comprising a motor-driven separating knife (25), characterized in that at least one loosely rotatable support element (21) is arranged on the support frame (11) parallel to the driving wheels (16).~~

An apparatus for removing coverings laid on even surfaces, comprising:

- (a) a support frame for mounting driving wheels about a rotational axis and for accommodating a motor and a gear for driving the driving wheels in a working direction.
- (b) at least one support element arranged behind the driving wheels in the working direction, and
- (c) a motor-driven separating knife, wherein for the movement of the apparatus opposite to the working direction the driving wheels are arranged for lifting off by tilting the support frame onto the at least one support element with the separating knife pivoting about the rotational axis of the driving wheels.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that the support element (21) is arranged behind the driving wheels (16) in the working direction of the apparatus (10).~~

The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the motor-driven separating knife is fixed on two supporting plates pivotable about the rotational axis of the driving wheels wherein the pivoting range is limited by the engagement of pins arranged

on the side of the supporting plates into respective oblong holes on the support frame which have the shape of the segment of a circle.

3. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to one of claims 1 or 2, characterized in that the support element (21) is a support roller arranged centrally to the driving wheels (16).  
The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein at least one guide handle for tilting the support frame is provided on the support frame above the at least one support element.
4. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to one of claims 1 or 2, characterized in that the support element comprises at least two support wheels (21).  
The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the support element is a loosely rotatable support roller arranged centrally and parallel to the rotational axis of the driving wheels in the working direction.
5. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that at least one guide handle (14) is provided on the support frame (11) above the support element (21).  
The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the support element comprises two loosely rotatable support wheels the axes of which are arranged parallel to the rotational axis of the driving wheels.
6. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the support frame (11) is formed of two legs (12, 13) arranged with a distance between each other.  
The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the gear is arranged between two supporting plates.

7. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the gear (18) is arranged above the driving wheels (16).  
The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the driving motor for the driving wheels is arranged on the gear.

8. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that a supporting plate (19) is provided in the area of each driving wheel (16) and that each supporting plate (19) comprises at least two pins (23) arranged at the same distance toward the center of the axis of the driving wheels (16) and engaging into oblong holes (24) formed in the support frame (11) and having the shape of the segment of a circle.  
The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the separating knife is fixed on a mounting plate which is mounted to the supporting plates and on which a driving motor for the separating knife is arranged.

9. (New) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a drive with an intermittent pivoting movement is provided for the separating knife.

10. (New) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the support frame comprises two legs arranged with a distance between each other, each of which comprising a cantilever arm for mounting a support element.